300

2/6

VINDICATION

OF THE

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Anon

Church of England.

Endeavouring to Prevent all Future

QUARRELS

AND

DISCONTENTS.

PHIL. II. 14.

Do all things without Murmurings and Disputings.

LONDON,

Printed for R. C. and are to be Sold by Randal Taylor, 1689.

A SHORT

VINDICATION

BHT 40

CONSTITUTION

BHT 10

Church of England.

Fire avoiding to browns al. Furnie

QUARRELS

d W A

DISCONTENTS.

HI HES

be all congruentions blue we we and Diffrating.

LONDON

Priceal for R. C. and are to be Sold by Randal Taylor, 1689.

ition to favour the Messell Th

TOTHE

Most Illustrious

PRINCESS.

Her Royal Highnes

Oplan Del Sor and

Princels of DENMARK.

MADAM,

Humbly Confess, It is a great
Presumption in Me, to Offer any
thing to a Person of so Great
Majesty and Judgment, but the Assurance I have of Your excellent Dispofition

The Dedication.

sition to favour the Meanest Thing from a good Intention (besides the Greatness of Your Charity towards many of my Relations) gives me this Encouragement of the courage mention of the

I am confident of Your Highnesses readines to promote the Trace of all People; which makes me conclude, That whatevere included thereunto, will be

graciously Accepted

One of Your Decaded Servants hath often told me of Your Highnesses Zeal ton God, and to Your Country which nothing here below can sufficiently Requite; therefore I doubt not, but the Almighty will give You the Fruits of Peace, which can only answer so much the Rietx and Goodness. Some of the Diversity and Opinion but there must be Diversity and Opinion but the World endiness. Address Dispositions being moith

The Dedication.

generally as various as their Tempers and Complexions; but methinks thit Should not cause Difference in Affection, which is the only thing that gives Occasion to our needless Quarrels and Super-Stivious Scruples ! Do prevent which, it must be the Work of Heaven only wis And fo far as it may be bouful for me to Judge! I which there can he Nos thing more proper Than to consider, bond agreeable the Constitution of Our Church is to the Commands of QOD 4 which all must of Necessity comply with, if they would but lay afide all Paffion and Prejudice, which hath all along given Birth and Growth to our Divisions. And it is sad to think, That our Gall-less Religion should by this means he Entituled to JamyebWar and Blood bed It is a Bleffed Thing to be an Instru-

It is a Blessed Thing to be an Instrument of Peace, and the least Hopes of promoting

The Dedication.

promoting it is very pleafing to the Minds of all Good Men; and I am sure Your Highness will to the uttermost Encourage it, having always the Fruits of it in Your own Breast.

That Your HIGHNESS may always continue Stedfast and Unmoveable, (as You have hitherto done) and in the End obtain Everlasting Life, is the Hearty Trayer of,

MADAM,

Your Highnesses Most Humble,

mean of Place, and the leak Hopes of

gratomova

and Most Obedient Servant,

THOMAS GRICE.

A

SHORT VINDICATION

OF THE

Church of England.

ENDEAVOURING

To Prevent all Future Quarrels and Discontents.

OD Almighty (tho Man by his Disobedience had pull'd off the Seal of the Indenture which he had made with him) was pleased to renew his Covenant for the Salvation of lost Mankind: He was pleased also to give forth a Commission to certain Elected Perfors, to proclaim unto him the grand instance of his Divine Love, and his Gragious Goodness; marriely, What it is he hath done

done for them, in and by his Son Jesus Christ; and withal to assure Mankind, (that unhappy Seed of Adam) that the Merits of Christ's Blood are sufficient, thrô Grace, to effect their Reconciliation with their offended God: And that they believing the Power of his Resurrection, and committing themselves to him, by submitting to the Motions of his Holy Spirit, and by Fairly, placing their Affiance upon his gracious Promises, may obtain an Eternal Inheritance among the Blessed, thrô the merciful Mediation and Merits of his Son Jesus Christ.

But fince these Holy Men (whom God had thus Commissioned) are fallen asseep, the vigilant and watchful Enemy of Mankind, Satan, hath prevailed by his sly and deceitful Subtilities, not only to bring in a Counter-Doctrine, and to commit High-Treason against the Royalty, Love, Goodness and Sovereignty of the Son of God, by altering changing, and contradicting his Gospel-Proclamation, to the great obscuring and dishonoring of his Name, and grand Prejudice of the Sons of Men; but also hath employed many to pretend unto their Brethren, that they

((34))

they have a more Sgraphical Understanding and a greater infight into the Word of God, than the Apoltolical Doctrine, holds torth, making the World believe, that Religion is nothing else but a Politick linguist and the Precepts of the Gospel of Jelus Christ to be nothing else but Human Arts and Constitutions, and the Apolises and Evangelist, not Men inspired by the Holy Ghost, but States Men employed to make these Constitutions to take effect in the World.

Men employ d to make these Constitutions to take effect in the World.

But not only this and the Satanical Subtilities of the Devil effect, but also he induced many coneglect the Fundamental Principles of Religion; to spend their whole time about Discipline, Ceremonies, and Circumstantial Points; And in this their fierce and eager pursuit, the Spirit of Error not suffering them to be content with those Rules, and that clear Light, which so brightly shines, and is so eminently refulgent in the Word of God; They are led by their own soolish Fancies, daily creating in them divertity of new Opinions; and so falling into Secte and Schisms, and by their Divisions and Mental Reservations, they preserve not the Unity

((34))

But Hickory dilcon sened Members reparating themselves from HET BODY THEY BECOME MOMERCUS IN the Bond of their Religion, breaking the Bond of Places the Library, and falling off from the Chimanion of Saint, as if it were no Article of their Creed, and being in love with their linearing and being in love with their linear and their linear and being in love with the love with the linear and being in love with the love with the linear and being in love with the lo And hot only to Bot halign and imcharitably Asperie those that differe from them THE ACTION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PARKET OF Beneval In the the 1990's Chiff noted 51 to -marker ther definitely de Curioffices, by then groundlets and pragmatical Disputa-tions Bolle Religion, they present (without Legar Allohority or approved Regions) to And this there Presending Brethren breed great Factions and Seditions in the Com The Tempers and Sedicions in the Comis while Tempers at the damper every the Shipp troop of the Charch . "To prevent which Diffurbances." Page gave this Advice, Do and £ 83

Whites Smithous Marminings 300 and Bi part thereof 988 386 State Total Total Total And do Cavil of concimes about the leaft necessary Girly First, Bacantembill me ore D Gantroverfees op Beligion by the Supi on sien of the Laute me omit the Honor of Go mand megleto the otherwing of die indipentale cacy of his Refurections witnesthratino and Sair Secondly (Because in Doubing about it by the Rightcoardina faith door along on ce 36 CHIRA PARK OUT COM SELECTION AND ART ATT ATT ATT ATT last Capacitated thro thandeans on thing ara-500 Fourth mos Beceuse the Tradition of the Scriptures is Infallible, therefore the Truth of them is fo too. -svol shieldy, Hoodballingting sout of enefred to the Example of Christour Advisus into the defor from b different Apprehen for of strings, to that be wonder ended with and attlingly some Partial dell amos placed by the standard or cession of the same our Highby Organization fullicernight be frusty'd, and Man (not-- Hirft, Forbear Diffuting, because while we paralo, (woomitthe Honount of Godicil Men reinitiation of the far bandle of a particular the Church and dubor tender Confut wints B 2 and upon

KUX

and Actions of those who are the Ruling part thereof, and the only lawful Magierates, do Cavil oftentimes about the least necessary and forget to Honour God for the glorious Nativity and Incarnation of this Son for the Merns of his Deady and the Power and Efficacy of his Refurrection, whereby they are broughe (by a lively Hope) to be justified by the Righteoufries and perfect Obedience of Chiff in the Court of Heaven and are at last Capacitated thro the Merits of his gracious Mediación, robe reconsilato God. and confequently roobtain Everlating Salof them is fo too. vation. worther larger go profile God , for the fevetal Offices of himson Jefund Stripe x 3 ad 1 or

Priest and Medianor, that by the Sacrifice of his Blood, and by the only Meric and Interection of the same our High-Priest Divine Justice might be satisfy'd, and Man (notawahita white his Transgressions and Contrathe Alkings to be subvine distingues), might be presented up whee before add the adoptsingular his Distingues of the Son, and cherebine 2 d upon

upon difabling his own Justice from making his Covenue not the shismed raditultyles Secondly, For fending his Son to be our Prophet, to Instruct his Church, by revealing unto it the Way and Means of Salvation; in communicating unto the Members thereof, this Grace and Redemption which he hath purchased for them from his Father, Rom. 5. 17. in declaring the whole Will of his Heavenly Father unto them, Whence we may learn, That it is a gross and intol. kerable Error in Men, to think that our Saviour Christ hath not delivered all things perraining to the necessary Instruction and Government of the Church, but left them to the Traditions and Intentions of Men: And that we may rett abundantly fatisfy d with that Doctrine which he hath communicated unto us, let us leave off all Murmurg feinfalem, we at legninglit bus sgni-But then again As in the time of Cavilling and Disputing we omit the Honour of God, so also we neglect our indispensable Duties We make no progress nor profiociency in our Duty God's Services are left undone, his Will unfulfill d, his Ordinances -unill neg-

meglected, the Conditions and Roomifes of his Covenant not thought aport buty his Mercies are Aighted, his Onice is rejected, his Goodness undervalu'd, and his Name fo often in our Disputes talkt of, that his Nature is almost quite forgotten. gars sinutantos ai Thus while we are Disputing, while we are in our Angelical Raptures, as we think them; while only in our own vain and fooling Concerts we are entry delike Elijab in'a Fiery Charier (in our Thor Difputings) even unto Heaven; we rather keep our felves diffant from the Union and Commismion of Jefus Chrift, and deprive our felves of That Mercy and Salvacion which by an Humble Submillion, Thro Parth unto God, we might have obtained your ow sads ba A Thus by our Disputings and Cavillings about Religion, about the Way to our Heavenly Jerusalem, we at least make no proofers, and (I am afraid) con often mils of Sill Hitended Journey: Which brings me Third Realist which is, That we should do things without Disputing to because no Moral Evils, relating to Ecolehaltical Con-

stitu-

Antitions are feerer of unknown, among all things that concern the Interest, or are ferviceable to the Cause of Religion; and the Service and Worthip of God.

There's nothing that makes a greater Bluftering and Hurly-burly for gives a greater Affront to the unpeaceable, unquiet, and unreafonable Temper of those who are devoid of the Spirit of Conformity and Allegiance I than Ceremonies and Cenfures of the Church, which (howallows able and conformable to right Reafon) is early proy dand reconcil d from the feveral Used and Ends, for which they were with the Determination, and Albridge bing billing

Decency, may render our Service divide

Now that the Ceremonies of the Clurch are things in themselves meanly Indifferent, and to no direct part of Worthip lista Truth acknowledg'd and dollar de fince that they are only Beelefiathoat and Huemin Constitutions And the Doctrine of Commond Prayer and of the Homilles (fpeaks mig of Feelen Michigan Cevernonico pleapresto declireth, That elley are you as gody Diso pline .

pline and Order, which may be chang'd and alter'd, and therefore are not to be accounted equal with God's Law, which

is altogether upalterable of but so yes oriz

And again, our Articles affert, That our Church hath Authority to change and abolish Ceremonies ordain'd by Human Authority, that all things thereby may tend to Edification: All which shews, that there is no Holiness plac'd in them, and that they are in themselves no direct part of Divine Worship. Yet the observation of Ecclesiastical Ceremonies, tho things in themselves meerly indifferent, and left only to the Determination and Appointment of the Church, so far as they make for Order and Decency, may render our Services more acceptable to God.

Standing, Lifting up our Hands and Eyes, Silence in the Service of God, and fuch like Decent Rites, which are not determined particularly as necessary Duties, yet, as they include a Reverence of God and his Ordinances, as they are an obedient Respect.

pline

to that Command, That all things be done: in Decency and Order : (Laftly, As they) include a fublection to the only Lawful Magistrate, and a delire of the Churches Peace | are things which may be highly ferviceable to the Caule of GOD's Glory and the Honour of his Religion: Whenee we may observe, That all irreverene and unbeforming Gottures, all Eccles fiaffical Ceremonics and Rives of Religion repugnant to the Word of God, or not wattantable by the general grounds thereof; fuelias are not for Order, Decency, or Edification in general, that all Will-worling, whereby we make any thing a part of God's Service, which is not commanded by himfelf, or has Episcopal Authority in it, thô it has never to great a thew of Godlines in it yet in that it leaneth to Man's Wifdom, is altogether forbidden and unlawful, the Mind is better holden in the state

Ceremonies be never to good and innocent in their own Nature (as being neither owned as our necessary Duties, or used as the Papists use them, namely, as operative Means

tondonstrynamathronour South and by themselves alone 1) yes habe had missing on increducing too many, would be very preindicial to the Garfaire Christian Religion a as blood with guarather to assent these Esters midPores than comind our Speritual Pusies in and by streying our Asie uns from that word and Spiritual Morthip and Adores tion bylyhich alone God is glorified and fiaftical Ceremonie based vilectoral letting one repugnant to the Word of God, or not Thirdly b That me Bows interback admissed in the Church and preferibe in youther Forms of Worthip replaguant to Gad's Word wen condary so good Onder and Descriptydered w - Bideo therefore abole Bealchaftinal Serge monds, thaithings in Athematives altogether Indifferents Det as for master of we are allowable in that they make for Dessacy Queler shoul Bedification to and in shate the ready the Mind is better holden in the shing affored, and bener bolpen and furnilladin Invested Worldiposphon the Mint and Rody ate book journ't pogether in the farme Belini as our necessaria and Adoction lessen mo as Papifts ute them, namely, as operative Means 03

If then, I fay, to use them be a thing not contrary to might eleaforn and the contrary do the Diplervice to the Caule of Religion or Divine Service; then confequently diceandrableres theiness withing motally good Which being granted in houtellardy follows, That horeto hibitit estale Detero minimions of the Church; hot to commus nivate with the Members thereof, by a Subs mission to him who is the only lawful and Supreme Magiltrate in not to conform to Episcopal Constitutions, or (if necessity requireth) to Actions of General Synods or Counfels which make or condition mity, Order, and Edification, donteguently is a thing Morally Boil, and does as naturally appear to be Evil, as the contrary appears to be good For if Obedience and Genforminy be Moral Verties, it necessarily dollows from the Suggestions of Natural Reason! that the contraty loriz. That Rebellion and Nonconformity are Moral Vices. Therefore avoid Cavillings, for there needs no Dapus ting, fince that no Moral Evils (relating de Bedefiatheal Confinutions Tare feeter wi der therein especially to reframawonding 10

"If then," I fay, to use them be a thing not But I shall now pass from the Ceremonies of the Church to the Cenfures or Divine Services then conferned sorred

That Centures (as they are Judgments of the Church for ratification of the Threats of the Gospel against the Abuses thereof) are indispensably necessary, and therefore good and convenient, as doth most evimillion to him who is the ontrasque without

First Their use is this, That as Magistrates (by the Laws of the Commonwealth) do exercise their Justice, by inflicting and dispenfing Panishments to the Offenders, according to the nature of the Crime: So the Spiritual Centures are are necessary to the Church, both to help the Godly, and restrain and extirminate out of it the Profane and Irreligious Party, as the Penal Laws of the Magistrate in the Commonwealth.

But then their necessity does farther appear, fince in the Church of God there are of all forts, both Holy and Unholy, Obedient and Disobedient, it is impossible (without Correction) to preferve good Order therein; especially to restrain the Sons

of

of Disobedience from Offending or Slan-

derng their Profession.

From whence we may learn, That they who upon this Pretence, viz. That God forceth no man to come unto him, to ferve or Worthip him; therefore if they will retain Communion with the Members of the Church; If they will submit to the Constitutions and Determinations of it: If they will Assemble and Meet together, to invoke and call upon God's Name, to condole and publickly confess their Sins and Infirmities with them, to ask and beg Forgiveness at the hands of God; or, in a word, to serve and worship God, or do any Religious Act, they may, if they please or will; but so to do, they are not oblig'd, forc'd, or compell'd.

I fay, That they who upon this Pretence contemn, and think the Censures of the Church useless and unprofitable, or things not warrantable from God's Word; but only Acts and Constitutions of Men forward and ambitious of exercifing Authority; and therefore by them they are no whit debarr'd, (tho nevertheles, whom

Numiters

the Church separateth from the Outward Seals, they are also deprive of the Inward Graces;) I say, That these Men are sensites and unreasonable, like them in the 20th of S. Matthew, that result to bear the roke of Government, and to have a Sword in the Commonwealth.

But furthermore, There are many among us, who affecting or aspiring to the Celestial Supremacy, always endeavour either to induce a Reformation into Our Church, or else to institute a new Religion; and this they would fain do, by pretending, that they (and none else) are the true Tribe of Levi, sufficiently wise to be their own Priests, to Teach and Administer themselves; fitter to Instruct, than to Learn; to Teach, than be Taught; to Govern, than to be Governed; and thus they go merrily on in their foolish Concents; and being possessed with the Spirit of Disquiet, they seek to gratise their Envy, by procuring and causing the Jurisdiction of the Clergy to be Voted and Grieddown, and the power of the truly lawful Ministers

Ministers of God to be Reviled that they shemfelves might be exempted from Cano mical Obedience, and fo become Indepenthe Rational Way, and fink into Dicob WAnd orthis rethey idonoby Courting the People, and pleading the Caufe of a Godly Party; and telling them, that their Priests take too much upon them, in fludying for foolish and useless Ceremonies, strange and unnecessary Censures for them; whereas they are all Holy, year, very Holy every one of them And who do vou think thefe Men are do Why; thefe are they who are only Zealous and Devour the Ideming Godly Barry) And yetra Poople for filly that when they come to For counter, they are fure to be fufficienely Baffled, and to have themselves and Religion fufficiently exposed to Contempt; and upon all manner of Meracks, cither wounded with a fecret Diffile of their own Beligion on elfe oblige shemfelves to air ftupid and i bruitifo Wilfulnes and Obstitucy, not ment and in the Tent of are many Men in the World, who by their Personance Discourse, which they them-(elves

fo often, and so easily seduc'd; and that is the time, viz. when Men fall off from the Rational Way, and sink into Blind and Ignorant Devotion; from whence we may date most of our great Ills of Rebellion, and privy Conspiracy. In a word; From whence even all those Devout Fooleries, which so much incumber'd the World, had their first Rise.

Therefore fince that Ecclesiastical Cenfures (as appears from what hath been faid) are warrantable, and also of indispensable Necessity, for the Good and Government of the Church, they are therefore to be dispensed and born without Murmurings and Disputings.

Fourthly, Do things without Disputing, Because the Tradition of the Scriptures is Infallible, and therefore the Truth of them is so too, wherefore there needs no Reasoning or Contention about their Doctrine, or the Truth of their Information. There are many Men in the World, who by their Prophane Discourse, which they themselves

sclves call Wit, would fain Hector all Religion out of the World, by deriding all Attempts which tend to its Rational Justification.

And this they do by making the World believe, That Religion is nothing but the Fear of fome invisible Power, feigned in the Minds of some fearful Foolishly devout Men; and that the Bible is of no force as a Law Divine, but only there where it is made to be fo by Laws Civil and Political But that the Authority of the Scripping is altogether Divine and Infallible, and the Matter therein the immediate Inspiration of the Holy Ghoft, I shall (to take away all Cavilling and Disputing) sufficiently convince and demonstrate by these following Reafons.

Now the Authority of the Scriptures must either depend upon the Authority of the Church, or else God must be the Author of them; but the Authority of the Scripture can no way depend upon the Authority of the Church, because to believe the Scripture is a work of Faith, but the Church cann't infuse Faith. Surfar Pioto!

Willich

Again, Any Authority which the Church hath, must be proved by the Scripture; therefore the Striptures depend not upon the Church.

Now, that God is the Author of them, and that the Truth of them is unquestionable and infallible, we may eafily be con-

First, From the Doctrine of them, The Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of GOD, his Refuerection and Afcention, after his Death and Passion; the Union of his Divine and Human Nature into one Emmanuel; Three Perfons and Subfiltences in One GOD, and GOD to become Man, are things that the finite Capacity of Man cann't reach, being far beyond the narrow Sphere of his Understanding.

Secondly, From the Matter about which they Treat; They promise Eternal Life to the Faithful and Obedient, and Eternal Woc to the Disobedient; They prescribe Laws for the Thoughts, which none but God can pierce; They require Sacrifice, but prefer Obedience; They enjoyn Fasting, but its from Sin; They forbid Lufting, and Covering;

which

which Exactions and Prohibitions are not to be found in Human Laws, but only in his who fearches the Heart, GOD

Almighty.

Thirdly, From the continuation of the Wonderful Prophecies, foretelling things, to come (fo long Marked our before) with their Circumstances; not doubtful (like the Oracles of the Heathen,) but fuch as had in all their Times certain Performances ;; and therefore unto what may we attribute them, but the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost? Thus was the Messias promised to Adam Four Thousand years before he was born. Thus was the Rejection of the Jews, the Calling of the Gentils, the Kingdom of Antichrift foretold; all things coming to pass aright, without any failing or mistake; the fulfilling of which Promises cann't be afcribed to any, but the Infinite GOD, who grafps all Seafons and Times, and with the time infinite Eye, beholds all things prefent, no unwritten Verities and to come of back fire

Fourthly, From the quality and condition of the Pen-men and Writers of them; fome of whom were never train'd up in defects

Writings shew that depth of Wisdom, which the most Learned Philosophers could never attain unto: And then the Matter of the Heavenly Doctrine, and savouring nothing of Worldly and Earthly Affections; but every where condemning the same, declaring the GOD of Heaven to be

the Inspirer thereof.

Whence also farther (to avoid all occafions of Questioning and Doubting, or rather of Cavilling and Disputing) we may learn by the way, That fince the Scriptures do receive indifpenfably their Authority, not from the Church, but from the only perfect and True GOD, that thereupon being themselves holy, perfect, and true, as he is, are also sufficient for the knowledge of Christian Religion; that they do most plentifully contain all Doctrines necessary to Salvation: Whence it followeth, we need no unwritten Verities; no Traditions, no Inventions of Men, no Canons of Councils, no Sentences of Fathers; much lefs the Decrees of Popes, to supply any supposed defects 2017

Directions in the Worship of GAD or in the Way of Life, than are express'd in

Canonical Scripture.

We may also learn from hence, That the Authority of the Scripture being Infallible, the Rule thereof is indiffentably true and fufficient to make us wife unto Salvation; and confequently, that there is to be learned out of it a Rule both of Eaith and Works for our Instruction, by the ordinary Means of Reading and Praying, to which GOD promises the affiltance of his Grace, Jam. 1.5. If any of you lack Wisdom; let bim ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given bim; for the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD is given unto us by the Holy Gboft, both to defend our Faith, and overcome all our Spiritual Advertaries, viz together with all falle Prophets, Hereticks, Schilmaticks, and fuch like, Eph. 6. 17. Therefore the Scriptutes, the immediate Inspiration of the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghoff , 1859 1195, 18 be canvas'd up and down or any way (4s we please) alter'd; their nature being as

ineliangeable as their Auchor antherefore leave off feeloning and Morall things without Diparting of the care are care of the care o

But Fifthly and Lastly, Awaid all Strife our of the Example of cut Saviour Christ. Our Saviour had the Spirit of Godly Constancy in him, His Carriage was always Civil and Urban, Humble and Candid, Quiet and Peaceable toward his Church, he was to far from the Spirit of Non-conformity and Contention of Morofity and Disobedience, that he rather condescended unto and comply do wight any National Terms, than sought to work Disturbance and Faction, Separation and Division among his Apostles.

Therefore let us stand to the Determination by the Chirch, and of Wifer Men than 80t selves? Let us stand to the Continuous and Actions of our Bishops, the only Lawful Magistrates. Let us still retain Continuous with the Churchy and Members thereof; that by Reactable Living Jung Strainty of Conversation, the Honour of Conversation, the Honour of Conversation, the Honour of Conversation, the Honour of the Cause of this Religion, the

the Interest of his Service and Worship

may be promoted and advanced.

In a word, Let us joyn with the Apostle, and do all things without Murmurings and Disputings, that we may be blameless and pure, the Sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a naughty and crooked Generation; that at last we may enjoy the Fruits of Peace and Obedience, viz. Eternal Life and Glory; throthe Merits and Mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

FINIS